

Kentucky Teacher

August 2008

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Commissioner of Education
JON E. DRAUD

Director, Division of Communications
LISA GROSS

Editor
FAUN S. FISHBACK

Copy Writers
SUSAN RIDDELL
MATTHEW TUNGATE

Graphic Designer
JOHN BOONE

Photographer
AMY WALLOT

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Front cover: Smiling young readers at Glenn Marshall Elementary surround Lisa Scully, center, and Donna Morris, both library media specialists in Madison County. Scully and Morris helped create a combined Program of Studies for all library media specialists in the district. Photo by Amy Wallot

Talk to the Experts ...

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Education Professional
Standards Board
100 Airport Road, 3rd Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: (502) 564-4606
Fax: (502) 564-7080
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www.kyepsb.net

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Kentucky Teachers'
Retirement System
479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601-3868
Phone: (502) 848-8500
Fax: (502) 573-0199
Toll Free: (800) 618-1687
<http://ktrs.ky.gov>

State board welcomes five new members

In May, Gov. Steve Beshear appointed five members to the Kentucky Board of Education. Four appointments replace members whose terms expired. Austin W. Moss, of Hopkinsville, replaces Keith Travis, who resigned.

Since 1995, Moss has served as the vice president of Human Resources at Jennie Stuart Medical Center in Hopkinsville. He represents the First Supreme Court District. He will serve the remainder of Travis' unexpired term, which ends April 14, 2010.

The new board appointments are:

- Dorothy "Dorie" Z. Combs, Richmond – A professor in the College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University, Combs previously served on the board from June 2002 to April 2006. She represents the state at-large. Her term expires April 14, 2012.
- Billy Harper, Paducah – Harper is president and chief executive officer of Harper Industries Inc. He has served on the McCracken County Board of Education. He represents the state at-large for a term that expires April 14, 2012.
- Stephen B. Neal, Louisville – Neal is executive director of the Jefferson County Teachers Association. He also represents the state at-large. His term expires April 14, 2012.
- Brigitte B. Ramsey, Falmouth – Ramsey is a public policy analyst for the United Way of Greater Cincinnati. She has served on the Pendleton County Board of Education. Representing the state at-large, Ramsey will serve until April 14, 2012.

The 12-member state board develops and adopts regulations that govern Kentucky's 174 public school districts. While the board has legal authority to establish performance stan-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Franklin County Circuit Court Judge Reed Rhorer, far right, administers the oath of office to four of the five new Kentucky Board of Education members, Steve Neal, left, Brigitte Ramsey, Dorie Combs and Austin Moss, prior to the May board retreat in Frankfort.

dards for local school districts and to mandate corrective actions, the board respects local autonomy of each school district.

Seven board members are appointed by the governor to represent Kentucky's Supreme Court districts and four to represent the state at large. The additional non-voting board member is the president of the Council on Postsecondary Education. Appointed members serve four-year terms and may be reappointed. Members are not paid, but receive reimbursement for expenses and travel.

Joe Brothers of Elizabethtown is the board chair. The vice chair position is vacant.

The board members elect a chair and vice chair at the beginning of each fiscal year. The

board meets two days every other month, either at the Frankfort offices of the Kentucky Department of Education or at other locations across the state.

State board meetings are open to the public, and Webcasts of the meetings can be accessed from the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site (www.education.ky.gov). Meeting dates, agendas and other information about the board and its activities also are posted on the Web site.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov – Click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the left-hand menu. Scroll down and select "State Board of Education."

KET's Arts Toolkits recognized among top programs

Kentucky Educational Television's (KET) Arts Toolkits, which are used in Kentucky public schools, were recognized nationally among the top 50 programs of the 2008 Innovations in American Government Awards competition. Selected from nearly 1,000 applicants, these programs represent the best in government innovation at all levels.

Since 2001, the Arts Toolkits project has provided teachers with multimedia resources in drama, dance, visual arts and music to increase student learning in the arts. DVDs of performances and artist interviews, lesson plans, posters and other content-specific informational materials aligned to state standards are in the toolkits.

KET, the Kentucky Department of Education, The Kentucky Center and the Kentucky Arts Council are partners in creating the toolkits. More than 280 Kentucky arts organizations and artists, along with some 470 P-12

classroom teachers, have been involved in creating the resources for the toolkits.

The variety and flexibility of materials included make the Arts Toolkits useful to arts specialists as well as generalists and to new as well as experienced teachers.

"In the past, there was very limited support for the novice arts and humanities teacher," said Philip Shepherd, arts and humanities consultant for the Department of Education. "The Arts Toolkits enable new teachers to learn quickly how to teach like veterans."

Teachers may purchase the Arts Toolkits separately by content or all four toolkits together. Schools receive discounts for multiple-copy orders of the same toolkit. Ordering can be done online at KET's Web site, by phone or by mail.

KET's Web site also provides Multi-Arts Tools, online resources for teachers that provide information about professional devel-

opment and student workshops, current arts education research and a Kentucky arts events calendar. It also provides links to upcoming arts programs broadcast on KET.

"I am delighted that the Arts Toolkit project has been selected as one of the most innovative government programs in the country," said Malcom Wall, KET executive director. "The toolkits have become essential for teachers and students around the commonwealth, and we are proud the concept is receiving national recognition."

The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University's school of government, sponsors the American Government Awards competition.

MORE INFO ...

www.ket.org/artstoolkit
Contact: (800) 945-9167, artstoolkit@ket.org

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Jon E. Draud, Commissioner of Education

Focusing our communities on education excellence

Welcome back to what I hope will be a successful 2008-09 school year. This summer has been a busy one for the Kentucky Department of Education staff as we made preparations for this new school year.

We've welcomed five new Kentucky Board of Education members. (See Page 2.) We've said goodbye to a large number of department staff members who retired between June 1 and Aug. 1. We have begun the process of filling those positions to maintain our high level of service and commitment to schools and districts in the journey to proficiency by 2014.

Even before the state testing window closed last May, the department was working to make sure schools and districts have data and results from the state-administered assessments early this school year. We released the nonacademic data for the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) just as schools were closing for the summer.

Results from the 11th-grade ACT assessment, administered last March, and test score data for both the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and CATS will be released early in the 2008-09 school year.

Examining education reform

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Interventions in Low-Performing Schools concluded its work in mid-summer. We have begun disseminating the panel's recommendations to superintendents and school leaders. (See Page 4.)

I am convening a diverse group of educators, administrators, legislators and representatives from education stakeholder groups to review the state's assessment and accountability system. David Spence, president of the Southern Regional Education Board, is facilitating the group's work. (See Page 4.)

Reigniting excitement of reform

As I have mentioned before in this column, I feel a sense of urgency to reignite excitement for your work in our public schools. Teachers and administrators are moving Kentucky education in the right direction.

According to a report released last school year by the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, Kentucky has moved from 43rd nationally in 1992 to 34th nationally in 2005, the last year for which rankings are available. We know from results on national and state assessments that Kentucky students, on average, are making steady progress.

However, there is growing apathy for public education in Kentucky. We need to get Kentucky's business and industry leaders involved in supporting public education the way they did in the early days of reform.

We need the support of parents, community leaders and our education-partner groups to help make Kentucky's education system among the best in the nation.

I have talked with Kentucky superintendents this summer about a program that appears to be gathering strong support for public education in northern Kentucky. Last fall, the group hosted a northern Kentucky community summit "Champions for Education: Focus Locally, Compete Globally."

The one-day event brought together more than 800 people to examine the issues facing public school districts and postsecondary institutions in the region. Participants also discussed issues related to preparing students with a rigorous education that allows them to compete in a global economy.

Everyone was encouraged to become actively involved in local schools – as mentors, tutors, business partners, school council members and advocates for education with the state legislature – and challenged that day to become champions for education. Each "champion" pledged to get involved for two years in at least three activities that would require personal commitment to local schools or participation in community-wide education programs.

What would it mean for your schools if 800

people representing several school districts in your region made a two-year commitment like that? Imagine that level of support from business, community and local government leaders, from parents and grandparents, from postsecondary educators and factory workers!

Multiply that level of support by several other small, regional groups, and we'll have thousands of people working locally for positive change in our public schools.

Throughout Kentucky, local business and community leaders, Chamber of Commerce members, local merchants, civic group leaders, school council members, retired teachers, church groups and PTAs want to help, but just don't know what to do. School leaders can call upon these partners to help make such regional summits possible.

The Champions for Education Summit materials are a great model for planning and conducting a regional summit. Agendas will vary to focus on those issues that address the needs of students in those schools. However, coming together to talk about education – from early childhood education to creating a work force – and its importance to the economic health of local communities is a conversation that is long overdue.

I hope to see these summits throughout

the state this school year. I hope thousands of parents, business leaders, civic leaders and educators will renew their commitment to improving education in Kentucky.

From the pen of an educator

In June, I was privileged to be guest speaker at the Harry M. Sparks Distinguished Lecture Series at Murray State University.

During the event, the College of Education presented its Outstanding Educator Award to Caldwell County's Dale Faughn. Faughn is 86 years old and has been a science teacher for nearly 58 years at Caldwell County High School. He has received numerous local, state and national awards for teaching.

In accepting the award, Faughn read a poem he wrote. I wanted to share it in hopes that it will help you get the 2008-09 school year off to a good start.

I'm a Teacher, and I'm Proud

"I'm just a teacher," I won't say;
The just in no way can convey
Importance of the job I do,
In the profession I pursue.
Profession, yes, I will repeat;
I say it though without conceit;
I want to make folks more aware
Of time it took me to prepare.
So many other jobs so great
I'll not take time to here relate;
But those who work there – as a rule –
Prepared themselves in someone's school;
And so when all is said and done,
The teacher ranks as Number One.
It's not for money or for fame –
This high profession I acclaim;
No other job could e'er so thrill –
Could e'er completely so fulfill.
One reason why I love it so:
It helps me help my students grow –
Much like the flowers, and many who
Burst from the bud and into bloom.
This honored work, which I extol
Weaves me into the nation's soul;
A maker of hist'ry I become –
To keep our nation strong and plumb.
I am a teacher, and I'm proud;
I say this with my head unbowed;
I say it in all honesty –
There's nothing else I'd rather be.

— Dale Faughn



Photo by Amy Wallot

Joining the celebration

Kentucky Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud sits among Oldham County Middle School students as they celebrate being named a 2008 Kentucky School to Watch. Eight other Kentucky middle schools received the designation for their work in improving student performance, instituting best practices for all young adolescents and creating school cultures that raise student achievement and support positive student development.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Jon E. Draud at jon.draud@education.ky.gov.)

New board hears proposed calendar, assessment changes

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Four of Kentucky's five new members of the state Board of Education attended their first meeting since being appointed by Gov. Steve Beshear. The new board members attending the June meeting were Dorothy "Dorie" Z. Combs of Richmond; Stephen B. Neal of Louisville; Billy Harper of Paducah; and Brigitte B. Ramsey of Falmouth. Austin W. Moss of Hopkinsville was unable to attend. (See Page 2 for information on new board members.)

The state board approved the process schools will use to change their instructional calendars, including a four-day school week that some districts are discussing. The 2008 General Assembly gave the commissioner of education the ability to approve alternative school calendars, beginning with the 2008-09 school year.

School boards seeking to deviate from a traditional calendar must submit a written request to the commissioner. The request must explain how the calendar will improve teaching and learning; include 1,062 hours of instruction; structure instructional days less than six hours long; and provide for professional development.

Larry Stinson, associate commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of District Support Services, said that under the new process, districts no longer receive a waiver because of excessive weather days, for instance. He said they have to add days to the end of the school year or have Saturday school to make up days missed due to inclement weather.

Schools are required to have a minimum of 177 six-hour days. Schools that want to implement a four-day week must seek the commissioner's approval, Stinson said.

Assessment changes

Ken Draut, associate commissioner of the Office of Assessment and Accountability, and Rhonda Sims, director of the Division of Assessment Support, presented the board with proposed changes to two areas of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Draut said many of the changes result from questions his office receives during administra-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Recently appointed Kentucky Board of Education member Billy Harper takes the oath of office prior to the June 11 board meeting in Frankfort.

tion of the Kentucky Core Content Test.

Changes to the Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Assessment Program, which establishes appropriate testing practices for CATS, include the use of classroom materials during testing.

The proposal would allow teachers to leave up classroom materials, but students aren't allowed to use the materials during testing.

"If you've done this to try to circumvent learning, it probably doesn't belong there," board member Combs said. "If it's up there because you're trying to ... accentuate and enhance the learning, then it is probably OK."

Board member Jeanne Ferguson saw the other side. "I'm not saying strip the walls, but I do have a problem if you're giving this in the content area you're teaching and the contents are on the wall, and, while the students are taking the test, how many students are going to be looking?" she said.

Board Chairman Joe Brothers agreed. "I don't know how you would keep from influencing the test without covering it up or removing it," he said.

Other changes would prohibit anyone from reading test items prior to the exam, ban cell phones and other wireless devices in classrooms during testing, prohibit teachers from coaching or editing answers on a test, and ban students from working ahead to future parts of the test or receiving extra time on any section of the test.

Schools also will be expected to continue normal instruction during the test window, except

during testing sessions. Under the proposed changes, portfolio development time cannot be "excessive," and schools will be barred from implementing rewards solely for the assessment and from using Extended School Services funds for test preparation.

The other area of change deals with accommodations for special student populations, including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. Proposed changes increase the use of technology and incorporate federal requirements for students with limited English proficiency. "These accommodations are considered temporary and should be phased out over time," Draut said.

Draut will return to the board in August with more information about the proposed changes.

Commissioner reports

In August, the board also will hear the final recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel on

Interventions in Low-Performing Schools. The panel has reviewed successful strategies for helping struggling schools raise student-achievement levels despite barriers to learning, such as poverty. It has developed a comprehensive listing of replicable programs that can be used by schools across Kentucky.

Education Commissioner Jon E. Draut said the panel has developed intervention strategies, different Kentucky Department of Education assistance measures and a legislative package. The panel will have its work ready for implementation during the 2008-09 school year.

Draut also discussed the Task Force on Assessment and Accountability, which is reviewing CATS. (See story on this page.)

"I am really optimistic about the assessment task force," he said. "If we are able to make this happen, it will be a great achievement in the state of Kentucky."

The board also:

- appointed Bill Beasley of Hender-

son to the Kentucky High School Athletic Association's (KHSAA's) Board of Control.

- approved district facility plans for Crittenden, Johnson, Lawrence, Martin and Todd County school districts and Danville, Russell and Williamstown Independent districts, and district facility plan amendments for Nelson County
- approved changes to the KHSAA bylaws and due process procedures
- approved additional revisions to 702 KAR 3:270, SEEK Funding Formula
- approved a site for a proposed new preschool facility in the Harlan Independent school district

The board's next regular meeting will be Aug. 6 and 7 in Frankfort.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Kentucky+Board+of+Education

Task force begins looking at CATS

By Lisa Y. Gross

lisa.gross@education.ky.gov

The Task Force on Assessment and Accountability is reviewing the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Its goal is to provide a blueprint for the system's progress in the future that ensures CATS meets the best interests of public school students.

Kentucky Education Commissioner Jon E. Draut asked statewide organizations, education partner groups and leaders of the Kentucky General Assembly to name members to the task force. The members are:

- **Jim Applegate**, vice president for Academic Affairs, Council on Postsecondary Education; **Joe Brothers**, chair, Kentucky Board of Education; **Dale Brown**, superintendent, Warren County (representing the Partnership for Successful Schools); **Paula Eaglin**, Kentucky Association of Professional Educators; **Rep. Tim Firkins**, 38th District, Louisville;
- **Jenny Lynn Hatter**, instructional supervisor, Harrison County (representing the Kentucky Association of School Administrators); **Marlene Helm**, Lexington Fayette Urban Government; **Rep. Jimmy Higdon**, 24th District, Lebanon; **Brenda Jackson**, past president, Kentucky School Boards Association;
- **Sen. Dan Kelly**, 14th District, Springfield; **Mike Lafavers**, principal, Boyle County Middle (representing the Kentucky Association of School Councils); **Roger Marcum**, superintendent, Marion

County (representing the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents); **Sen. Vernie McGaha**, 15th District, Russell Springs;

- **Suzanne McGurk**, representing the Kentucky Community and Technical College System; **Rep. Harry Moberly**, 81st District, Richmond; **Helen Mountjoy**, secretary, Education Cabinet; **Sharron Oxendine**, president, Kentucky Education Association;
- **Rep. Frank Rasche**, 3rd District, Paducah; **Wayne Roberts**, district assessment coordinator, Wayne County (representing the Kentucky Association of Assessment Coordinators); **Rep. Carl Rollins**, 56th District, Midway;
- **Sandy Rutledge**, president-elect, Kentucky PTA; **Bob Sexton**, executive director, Prichard Committee; **Steve Stevens**, Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce; **Diana Taylor**, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce; and **Sen. Johnny Ray Turner**, 29th District, Drift.

The task force will seek input from teachers, administrators, parents, businesspeople, elected officials, education advocacy groups and others. The group will analyze individual components of CATS and determine the effectiveness of those in meeting the needs of students.

Dave Spence, president of the Southern Regional Education Board, will serve as facilitator of the group. The task force will work from August through November and prepare its recommendations for the General Assembly in January 2009.

School improvement:

Middle Fork educators found recipe for student success

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Middle Fork Elementary, which vaulted from one of the lowest one-third of all schools taking the 2000 Kentucky Core Content Test to having the highest adjusted accountability index in 2007, consolidated with Millard Hensley and Prater Borders elementaries this school year to form North Magoffin Elementary (Magoffin County).

While Middle Fork Elementary may be no more, its story will live on as a lesson of how all Kentucky schools can reach proficiency – or better, how to take lemons and make lemonade. In an interview last spring, Principal Russel Howard talked about how the faculty had worked to increase student achievement over the past seven years. He and other faculty members interviewed expressed confidence that they will take that recipe for student success with them to new assignments.

Howard and teachers at Middle Fork can't point to just one reason for the dramatic upswing in test scores. But they say it started with a Scholastic Audit mandated by state law for the lowest-performing schools and the help of Highly Skilled Educator Susan Nichols.

Former Principal Ruth Montgomery and Nichols began implementing programs and “got the ball rolling” before Howard arrived five years ago. “When I got hired here, I really didn't want to monkey with things because they were being successful and doing the right things, some really good things,” he said.

Setting priorities for change

Howard said Montgomery and Nichols did several things that other schools can still learn from. They addressed standards provided in state curriculum documents such as the Program of Studies and Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment.

Teacher Melinda Owens, who taught 4th grade last year, said teachers used to go into their rooms and shut their doors “and taught their own thing.” After Nichols arrived, teachers changed and began working together more and looking at standards. “I can tell you the core content without even looking it up,” she said.

Another change was using more than a textbook for instruction, 5th- and 6th-grade teacher Linda Montgomery said.

“I was taught to do that,” she said. “But I had to change, and when I began to change, that's when I saw my scores begin to go up.”

Teachers also began to share in common planning. Some even switched which grades they were teaching to emphasize their



Photo by Amy Wallot

Middle Fork Elementary (Magoffin County) kindergarten student Cooper Gevedon asks teacher Mikia Bolen about an assignment he had completed last spring.

strengths. Primary teacher Dennita Patrick said, “You really have to get people to places that they are comfortable, teaching what areas they're best at.”

School staff set high expectations for students, Principal Howard said. “I don't know if that comes with success or if that breeds success,” he said. “We believe that each one of our students can learn at a high level. We work very hard to make sure that they do, and they work very hard to make sure that they do.”

And while the schools' 80 percent rate of free and reduced-meal program participation may seem like a disadvantage, “It's just never been a question,” he said. “Every student that comes through our door, we truly believe they can learn at a high level. It doesn't matter if they have free or reduced lunch. It doesn't make any difference.”

Every teacher took responsibility for every student. That is why Howard said he wanted all of the school staff to know every student's name.

Montgomery said every teacher disciplined and praised all of the students, not just those in their classes.

Patrick added, “The kids love that. They know that we're interested in how they're doing. So they try harder if they know everybody knows what's going on and everybody's interested in how well they do.”

Students' extra efforts were another component of the school's turnaround. Students were made accountable for their learning,

Howard said. Teachers focused on students in kindergarten or early primary who were struggling, and then used the school's Title I teacher to work with those students.

The school's Extended School Services program was schoolwide. Students used programs in computer class based on what they were learning in their content-area classes, he said, to remediate and provide additional learning opportunities.

School staff also dissected data into subgroups and even analyzed individual questions on state assessment results. “A lot of our PD is driven by that data analysis,” the principal said.

Patrick, a primary teacher, credited Nich-

ols with helping teachers use projected test scores to help identify students who needed additional help. Owens said Nichols put students' grades in a spreadsheet and compared their Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) scores. Nichols also compared the two results with students. “She really started to make the kids accountable,” Owens said.

Patrick said she believes the teachers have unique ways of motivating students. Teachers in the upper grades set goals for students on practice KCCT tests “and students try to meet that goal,” she said.

“The whole school knows what they're trying to meet, and if they don't (meet the goal), the kids are really upset,” she said.

Owens said students who scored a four on their open-response practice tests got to sign a poster. Students competed to see who could sign the most posters. Owens said students take the tests seriously.

“They're accountable for themselves. They know that we work hard to teach them what they need to know,” she said. “We tell them everything in that core content they will have been taught this year, but it's their responsibility to learn it.”

Principal Howard said his school held every teacher accountable for student learning, not just those in grades that are tested on state assessments. Students know what's expected of them at test time, but it's preparation up until the two-week testing window that makes the difference, he said.

“You simply cannot wait for that two-week testing period and then get serious about learning,” Howard said. “It has to be important that entire year.”

He is quick to point out that while he and the teachers analyzed test data and encouraged students to do well, the KCCT was not the reason they were there. “You would think that the test scores would be the only thing that we look at and that we talk about. Actually, it's not,” Howard said. “The things that we talk about here are what can we do to ensure that these kids get every opportunity to learn.”

The Middle Fork students will get those opportunities at a much larger school this year. However, the teachers are excited about the opportunity to serve lemonade again this year in whatever school they are teaching.

“We're sad to leave, but we've made changes in the past, and I'm sure this change will be successful as well,” Patrick said.

Middle Fork Elementary Progress

Year	Total Accountability Index
2000	53.3
2001	76.8
2002	84.1
2003	93.6
2004	99.8
2005	108.7
2006	107.4
2007	124.6*

*Adjusted Accountability Index

MORE INFO...

www.magoffin.kyschools.us

Accounting changes add up for students

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

When Martha Collins left professional accounting to teach the subject in 2002, she returned to her alma mater at Jessamine County High School to take the position held by her former business teacher. She found that not much had changed.

"When she retired, she handed me a box of rulers because students had to underline all the workbooks. I remember thinking, 'I have worked in accounting and never had to underline anything. Why are we underlining still?'" Collins said. "So it kind of came full circle."

Collins, now an accounting and marketing teacher at Madison (County) Southern High School, said she thought high school accounting was boring, but majored in it in college anyway. She found the way it was taught at the college level to be very exciting.

When she began her first year of teaching, "I used the old curriculum and I hated it. ... It was just boring; it was boring for me to teach and it was boring for the kids to learn," she said.

Then, she began to make changes. "I had just come from the business world, and I knew that the curriculum being taught wasn't what was really happening," Collins said. As she changed how and what she taught, she saw more students sign up for her classes.

In April 2006, Nancy Graham and Steve Small, business and marketing consultants from the Kentucky Department of Education, formed a task force of business, industry and postsecondary partners to review the Program of Studies for business courses. The task force recommended developing a new accounting curriculum.

High school accounting had not changed since 1932, Graham said. In the new millennium, business students were not engaged and excited about the accounting profession. A lot of students took Accounting I but not Accounting II. The coursework was a lot of posting, journalizing and rote memorization, Graham said.

"They never really understood why they were doing something,



Photo by Amy Wallot

Accounting teacher Vanessa Butts, left, shows Greenwood High School (Warren County) junior Eric Lyles and senior Brittany McGuirk how to enter information in a financial software program. Butts said the state's new accounting curriculum will be good for today's high school students interested in accounting careers.

they just memorized the process," Graham said. "What we're trying to do (with the new curriculum) is increase a student's ability to analyze and understand why something happens in a financial statement, instead of just knowing how to prepare one."

Collins said the old curriculum was paper-based and really a record-keeping class. The new curriculum focuses on career possibilities for accounting. "Before in accounting, income taxes were never mentioned," she said, "you know, the first thing that you think of when you think accountant."

Kentucky's high school accounting textbook and curriculum is now called "Accounting and Finance Foundations, and Financial Accounting." The curriculum helps students understand why accounting is the language of business and how accounting concepts form the basis of any business transaction. A personal finance section also teaches students studying any career path

to live within their means once they leave home for work or postsecondary studies.

Ashley Bell, accounting teacher at Barren County Area Technology Center, said the previous curriculum was more about transferring information into journals, then worksheets, then financial statements. "You didn't really analyze why that was there," she said. "You didn't really analyze why there was a net income or a net loss. Students knew there was a net income or loss, but they didn't really know why."

With the new curriculum, she uses an activity where students look at two similar companies, such as Home Depot and Lowe's. Students use the companies' financial statements to decide which company to invest in and why. The new curriculum uses more higher-order thinking, and that has engaged students, she said, because they like using real-world examples.

"It is harder, but I think students see the relevance a little better,"

Bell said.

There also is a renewed emphasis to prepare students for classes they will take in college. "We know kids can't go out and get an accounting job out of high school," Graham said. "They're going to have to have some postsecondary work."

For high school accounting majors under the new curriculum, students need to take Accounting and Finance Foundations, Financial Accounting, Computer and Technology Applications, and an elective, Graham said. Also, Calculus or Pre-Calculus is suggested.

The teachers who developed the curriculum and the Department of Education's career and technical education staff had to sell the new curriculum to teachers across the state, many of whom had taught the old curriculum for two decades. In the summer of 2007, Graham scheduled eight workshops that trained more than 200 teachers.

Collins said she would stand up

in front of 25-year veteran teachers as a relatively new teacher and ask them to throw away everything they had been doing. Initially, many were skeptical, "but by the end of the day everybody said, 'This is right. This is what we need to be doing,'" she said.

Vanessa Butts, a 14-year veteran accounting teacher at Greenwood High School (Warren County), was one of those teachers. "I was a critic. Wasn't going to like it, wasn't going to do it. But I bought into it. I'm not going to say it's perfect, but with some tweaking it's going to be pretty good," she said.

Butts believes the new curriculum is more practical and relevant to today's students. "It's financial literacy," she said. "I tell the students: 'Look at those Enron people. They had the accountants, but the accountants were the ones that decided to play with the figures and do some things that were illegal, and look what happened to the business.'"

Graham said industry professionals helped build buy in from teachers. The state Board of Accountancy gave \$125,000 for accounting education and to train and educate teachers on the new curriculum. Members of the Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants attended every training for support and to answer questions, she said.

"The reason that the Kentucky Society of Certified Public Accountants got so involved is there aren't enough students going into accounting," Graham said. "They could see that as CPAs retired there weren't going to be the numbers that were needed."

After a pilot year, the curriculum has had several revisions and added additional projects. "We know this is a work in progress, but we think it's a great start and the right direction for what we're doing," Collins said.

MORE INFO ...

Nancy Graham, (502) 564-3472, nancy.graham@education.ky.gov

Martha Collins, (859) 986-8424, martha.collins@madison.kyschools.us

Book smarts

Madison County aligns library curriculum across the district

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Madison County Superintendent Tommy Floyd calls it an "accountability piece."

Donna Morris, a third-year library media specialist (LMS) at Daniel Boone Elementary School, calls it "structure" for someone new in the field needing reassurance and stability.

Lisa Scully, an LMS at Glenn Marshall Elementary, calls it a "great avenue" to work with teachers and offer insight into the ever-changing scope of an LMS's work.

They're referring to a 66-page Program of Studies and Kentucky Core Content for Assessment 4.1 document the two library media specialists helped create to enhance classroom instruction and make sure all Madison County students get the most out of the school library media center.

"Madison County is a special place, thanks to our media specialists," Floyd said. "They all rolled up their sleeves and did this on their own. Creating this document was their idea. They shared it with the Kentucky Department of Education. They shared it with the district. Our students can only benefit from their work."

Morris, Scully and other library media specialists in the district began work on the "Library Media Center Curriculum" document in early 2007 when the more inexperienced library media specialists in the district wanted a firmer foundation on which to work.

"We didn't have a scope and sequence," Morris said. "At the time, Lisa and I were both first-year librarians, and we didn't have the assistance you get when you're teaching in the classroom. They have a teacher's manual and a plethora of stuff to figure out what needs to be taught in what grade. We were asking what there was as far as curriculum in Madison County for an LMS, and I was handed a two-page bulleted sheet. It had each grade level, but

there wasn't any meat to it. It had nothing to do with core content and CATS (Commonwealth Accountability Testing System) assessment. It was, 'If you cover it, you cover it.'"

They also noticed a growing number of young students changing schools within the district.

"Kids could possibly go through 2nd grade in three different district schools, and all they did was dictionary skills because they were hopping around," Morris said. "We divided it (the school calendar) into nine weeks and different content we'd cover during that time. Hopefully, if there was a student who was transient, they'd get everything covered in that time."

Superintendent Floyd agreed. "One of our big goals is to be more of a school system than a system of schools," he said. "This is an accountability piece. Students now have a vehicle for accountability through the media specialists. Everyone is on the same page and is using their vision to make learning better for our kids."

Scully, the LMS at Glenn Marshall Elementary, said it's easier to communicate with new students thanks to the document.

"When a new kid comes in from another school, I can say, 'I know Mrs. Morris taught you this.' We're using common lingo across the district. It's overall with the students, parents and other teachers, and in the end, the children are having easier transitions. I can see a big difference already," Scully said.

The district's library media specialists received release time to meet and develop a document that best suited the needs of the district. Within five

months, the document was completed and presented to the school board.

Research for the project was extensive. They studied other school districts in Kentucky and school districts outside the state. They considered core content and state and



Photo by Amy Wallot

Lisa Scully, left, and Donna Morris discovered as first-year library media specialists that they needed a better library curriculum guide to help teachers improve learning in Madison County elementary schools.

national standards. The document was implemented in all Madison County schools during the 2007-08 school year.

"Just to be able to communicate what our kids are doing, not only in the building but across the district, has been such a benefit to all of us," Scully said.

"The standards that we've developed aren't going to change as much as scope and sequence," added Morris, the LMS at Daniel Boone Elementary. "It was an easy transition for me because I'm a new librarian, and I needed something to build on, something with more structure."

The document is divided into three categories: literary appreciation, informational skills and lifelong learning. The categories cover all areas from grades K-12 with emphasis on grades K-5.

"We feel if they get the 'good meat' in elementary school, it will travel with them," Morris said. "Middle and high school students are flexibly scheduled. Kids are either on their own or they come in through their language arts class, whereas in elementary school, it's more rigid."

"Anything that would relate into the library is in here," Morris added of the document. "A lot of core content we do with this is in reading and writing, but it's all in here."

Morris and Scully agree the document has reinvigorated the classroom-library partnership in all Madison County schools.

"It has given us a great opportunity to tell teachers, 'We can teach your kids research skills. What do you want us to help them research? If they are working on their writing portfolios and doing personal narratives, we can be reading books that are great examples of personal narratives,'" Morris said.

"Third-, 4th- and 5th-grade teachers have

all done a research project on what we cover in here," Scully added. "It was good for them to see that I was covering the same things they were covering in the classroom. It was a great avenue to have conversations about what we're trying to do and for us to not be so isolated in our lessons."

Notions about the work of library media specialists are becoming clearer, Scully said, thanks to the improved state of the partnership. That isn't the case everywhere, however.

"That perception of what a librarian is and that they just check out books is still out there," Scully said. "That's not what a librarian in this day and age does. Helping kids with online and print resources is only the beginning. Our document shows that. This position has evolved just like the classroom teacher position has evolved. We are education partners."

The curriculum document also paved the way to remove grading in library class in Madison County elementary schools.

"What does it say about a kid if he or she gets an unsatisfactory in library?" Scully asked. "Does that mean they need help with their reading? That they can't read? We researched this, presented to the elementary principals (middle and high schools in Madison County don't grade library use), and they bought into what we said. They went to the board, and we were there to answer questions. Now we don't do grading for library. It was not because we didn't want to. It was because we shouldn't."

Morris agreed. "Children do research in the library, but their final grade is in the classroom when they turn in their assignments," she said. "The research is just part of their work, but it's an important part."

To view a copy of the "Library Media Center Curriculum," or to get more information, contact Donna Morris, (859) 625-6070, donna.morris@madison.kyschools.us or Lisa Scully, (859) 625-6076, lisa.scully@madison.kyschools.us.

Contact Donna Travillian, library media services consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education, with questions about best library practices, library administration and library program resources at (502) 564-2106, donna.travillian@education.ky.gov.

Educators throughout state get ‘thoughtful’ about instruction

By Matthew Tungate
matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Thoughtful Education professional development didn't make sense at first to Leigh Ann Stewart, 5th-grade reading teacher at Belmont Elementary (Christian County). That's probably because she wasn't taught thoughtfully, she said.

"We sat in classes where it was complete lecture, and if I got it, I got it and if I didn't, I didn't," Stewart said. "To pass a test, I usually memorized using acronyms. I think we just made it through (school) the best way we could."

Thoughtful Education, a professional development program based on the research and development of Harvey Silver, Richard Strong and Matthew Perini, calls on teachers to develop lesson plans based on the different learning styles of students, to better understand how students learn and to intentionally plan using strategies and tools that engage students in higher levels of thinking.

Since using Thoughtful Education practices, Stewart has discovered that she is a mastery learner – fond of lectures and practice. She found that her school's staff is heavily mastery learners and understanding learners, who use logic and inquiry to learn. There are not many interpersonal learners on staff who like group work and attention, or teachers who are self-expressive (creative and artistic) learners.

"For me, planning a self-expressive or an interpersonal lesson is the hardest," she said.

But another aspect of Thoughtful Education, collaborating with colleagues, helped her overcome that. Stewart asks teachers with different learning styles to help her plan lessons. "So we learned, as a school, to tap into each other," she said. "We became learners ourselves."

Learning styles

Jimmie Dee Kelley, Hardin County's director of curriculum and instruction/GT, said schools in her district were assessing learning styles but weren't changing their teaching before the district began incorporating Thoughtful Education practices into instruction. Now teachers incorporate a "task rota-

tion," which includes activities for all four learning styles in their lessons.

She said doing so is important, since most at-risk students have interpersonal and self-expressive learning styles. "But if the teacher's teaching doesn't ever get on that style, then the engagement piece is much harder to accomplish," Kelley said.

Principal Keith Henry said his staff at South Floyd High School (Floyd County) found that out after beginning to use Thoughtful Education in 2006.

"We sort of teach our kids to the mastery learning style ... and all students weren't learning," which led to disciplinary referrals, Henry said. "Come to find out, 69 percent of our students were interpersonal learners."

Only 24 percent of the high school students were mastery learners. "That really woke our teachers up," he said.

South Floyd teachers changed the techniques they used most often. They began incorporating more techniques such as "visualizing vocabulary," where teachers give a word and students draw what it means to them.

"My teachers who are mastery learners cannot stand that activity. I can't stand it," Henry said. "But it's causing those interpersonal learners to deep process that vocabulary."

Joyce Jackson, senior associate and regional director of programs for the company that created

Thoughtful Education, said teachers have to look at understanding learners better. "We think we're in charge of learning, and we're not," she said. "The learner is in charge of the learning. Educators ask themselves, 'How well did they learn?' and should be asking 'How do students learn well?'"

Jackson, a former Kentucky Highly Skilled Educator, said the Kentucky Core Content Test does a good job of using all four learning styles. For that and other reasons, it is important that all students learn to use more than just their dominant style of learning.

"If we don't develop students' thinking skills in all four learning styles, we are not properly preparing them for the 21st century," she said. "The real purpose of school is to build competent workers who have mastered common skills and a common body of knowledge; creative problem-solvers who understand how to think and adapt; community contributors who can work well and learn within a team; and original producers who can tap into their own potential to create new and original products."

Strategies and tools

Kelley, the Hardin County director of curriculum and instruction, said Jackson's company has developed strategies and tools for teaching to each learning style that get students engaged, active and in-depth. "Those are the three words that best describe Thoughtful Education. It moves the teacher from being the only one delivering learning to actually facilitating learning," Kelley said.

The strategies include compare and contrast, a four-phase process where students describe two things, compare them, draw a conclusion and then apply the information. Teachers also teach vocabulary using CODE: Connecting, Organizing, Deep processing and Exercising activities.

Stewart, the teacher from Belmont Elementary, said CODE and the "make a case" statement – where students use a three-column method to

restate the question, write the correct answer and give proof – pulled her school out of decline.

"Within that you imbed the critical vocabulary," she said. "That is how you write a three or four on an open-response question. Believe it or not, we perform better on open response than we do on multiple choice."

Central City Elementary (Muhlenberg County) kindergarten teacher Jennifer Renfrow said her school and district have been working on vocabulary and are beginning to work on compare and contrast.

Vocabulary instruction is open-ended and moves away from worksheets, giving children a voice, she said. In kindergarten, teachers and students model a lot, using webbing and a "fist list," where students brainstorm a topic, then draw their hands and record their thoughts on the drawings.

"Thoughtful Education is very big on recording your thoughts, like reflective writing," Renfrow said.

Renfrow also uses a vocabulary notebook. She writes a word and her students draw a picture to go with it. "That is non-linguistic representation, so that when they see that word they can think of their pictures," she said. "They're making those connections through their drawing. Anything that can make a connection with them is good."

"Reading for Meaning" is another strategy Kelley said helps set the stage for reading. The teacher makes statements and asks for agreement or disagreement from students to arouse their interest and get them thinking in a variety of directions. Students read, then re-evaluate their original statements, before giving supporting evidence.

Stewart, the 5th-grade reading teacher, likes to use a pre-reading technique called "Mind's Eye." She tells students 10 words from a story. Students ask questions, make predictions, draw a picture or describe how the words make them feel. Students then share what they chose using comparative thinking skills showing that the strategies naturally mesh, Stewart said.



Photos by Amy Wallot

Carol Burnett, front, and Terry Wilson work with other members of the kindergarten learning team at Lincoln Trail Elementary (Hardin County) to develop lessons about the environment as part of last spring's Earth Day celebration at the school.

"They now are excited about what they are going to read. They now have a purpose for reading, and they now want to prove to their neighbor that they were right. I have them in the palm of my hand," she said. "It doesn't have to be reading – you could do that with any content area, with any grade."

Stewart's students' favorite activity is "Carousel Brainstorming." She puts chart paper around the room with a word, question, title or thought at the top. Students move from poster to poster writing what the word means to them.

"The key is if you're using your critical vocabulary and your combined document, everybody's engaged. You're hitting all the learn-



Lincoln Trail Elementary (Hardin County) teacher Pam Goodin helps primary student Elizabeth Kaiden with an assignment on measurements as teaching assistant Yvonda Pearce, in background, uses a different learning-style activity to teach the same lesson to another group of students.

ing styles, and they're making learning their own – then you're good," Stewart said.

Though schools implement learning teams differently, the principle is the same: a core group of teachers is trained in Thoughtful Education principles. Members of the group practice new strategies with one another, then teach those strategies to the rest of the teachers in the school. Teachers and administrators then watch each other teach and provide constructive feedback.

The key is planning, implementing and reflecting together. "Those pieces are very important, because if you try to implement without planning together, or you plan together but you implement separately, you're not going to get the richness and the growth that you're going to get when you do the three steps

together," Kelley said.

Teachers may work together through "teacher rounds." A small group of teachers focuses on a standard and then each takes a different aspect (activate prior knowledge, set scene for new knowledge, activity or assessment) to present to students in their classes, Kelley said.

Teachers also receive feedback through "learning walks," she said. Teachers and school administrators walk into classrooms to look at engagement levels of – and interaction between – teachers and students. They use what they learn during the walks to provide feedback about instruction.

Stewart, a Thoughtful Education teacher leader for Belmont Elementary, said accepting both teacher rounds and learning walks was difficult at first.

"Going through this, we've been very frustrated, we've been very hurt. Then you get tough-skinned to it, and you realize it's not personal," she said. "Our school has grown tremendously from the communication and discussion."

MORE INFO ...

www.thoughtfuled.com

Joyce W. Jackson, (502) 609-4425, jjack62284@aol.com

Professional learning community is the heart of a successful school

By Karen E. Branham
karen.branham@education.ky.gov

Prior to working in the Highly Skilled Educator Program with the Kentucky Department of Education, I was assistant principal of academics at Elizabethtown (Independent) High School.

Student learning, academic rigor, the sense of pride in athletic teams, as well as thriving clubs and activities, were evident in student conversations, in displays of student work, in daily announcements, but most importantly in the hearts of the young men and women who walk the halls.

This "tradition of success" does not develop overnight, nor is it sustained without a systemic plan for continuous improvement. Schools across the country are looking for methods to improve classroom instruction and the means to boost student learning on a continuous basis.

Many schools are finding success when they begin to function as professional learning communities (PLCs). Richard DuFour, Ed.D., author of "Learning By Doing – A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work," describes a professional learning community as collaborative teams of teachers who work interdependently to improve instructional practices that will positively impact student learning.

I believe one of the reasons behind the success of Elizabethtown High School is the existence of a professional learning community at work.

Several years ago, district leadership had the foresight to organize its teachers in small groups or teams, called "Learning Clubs." School and district leadership selected a teacher leader in each of the six content areas.

Each lead teacher learns and implements research-based instructional practices, such as "Thoughtful Classroom" strategies and tools, in his or her classroom. The lead teacher teaches the strategies and tools to the team so members can implement the strategies as well.

These small groups of teachers frequently share lessons, discuss student work and continuously seek to improve classroom instruction. The end result, of course, is better learning for all.

As teachers gather to discuss new strategies, they are constantly asking, "Is this helping my students learn?"

The teams are systematically analyzing their instructional practices to determine how they can better reach every student. When they determine what worked and what didn't, they apply this new knowledge to the next cycle of continuous improvement.

A professional learning community at work is clearly in place and thriving at Elizabethtown High School. The six lead teachers, Kim Black (science), Jennifer Fulford (social studies), Helen Wheatley (English), Paula Crabtree (mathematics), Janie Pennington (practical living and vocational studies) and Belinda Stark (arts and humanities) serve as an extension of the instructional leadership in the school.

They are focused on improving student learning. Clearly the professional learning community is one of the reasons the high school's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) results consistently are among the highest high school results in the state.

The imbedded professional development that occurs in the school's learning teams is not only contributing to the development of strong teams of teachers but it is also helping all students learn at high levels.

Pilot schools will receive raw data for end-of-course mathematics exams

Kentucky schools that participated in the piloting of end-of-course exams for Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry will receive the raw scores from the tests in August, according to a report Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud presented over the summer to legislative committees studying the implementation of the end-of-course exams.

The scores will not be reported as part of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) data for 2008, which will be released this fall. However, schools can use the raw scores to determine specific concepts and content that students need extra help in or are mastering. School, district and state data disaggregated by student populations also will be reported.

The 2006 General Assembly charged the Kentucky Department of Education with developing end-of-course exams in the three courses and asked for a report on findings from the pilot assessments. The legislature did not allocate General Funds for the development of the pilot exams. The department used Title II Improving Teacher

Quality funds to pay the cost of piloting activities.

The 2008 General Assembly did not include funding for end-of-course exams in the 2009-10 biennial budget. Money will be needed, Draud's report said, to expand the administration of end-of-course exams in the three mathematics courses in 2009 and beyond. More funding also is needed for limited, additional piloting in Algebra II.

Nearly 10,000 students took the Algebra II field-test exam, including 1,800 students who took an online version, to help with item development in October 2007 and February 2008. In May 2008, approximately 2,500 Kentucky students took the Algebra II pilot operational tests.

Kentucky is in a 13-state consortium with Achieve to develop an end-of-course exam for Algebra II. Achieve is a nonprofit organization created by the nation's governors and business leaders to help states raise academic standards, improve assessments and strengthen accountability. Achieve chose Pearson as the vendor to produce, administer and score the tests.

The Algebra I pilot operational test was given to 2,655 students, and 1,826 students took the Geometry pilot operational test through the University of Louisville (U of L) Center for Research in Mathematics and Science Teacher Development. Previously, U of L had developed diagnostic assessments to assist Kentucky teachers in determining whether high school students are mastering necessary content. Therefore, the Department of Education was able to build on this work with U of L and extend it to end-of-course exams for Algebra I and Geometry.

Teachers, postsecondary educators and content specialists from throughout Kentucky have been involved in development and/or review of test items for all three exams.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov/kde/administrative+resources/testing+and+reporting+/district+support/end-of-course+exams

Kathy Moore, (502) 564-4394, kathy.moore@education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Mock courtroom drama

Lewis County Transportation Director Jim Bob McGlone, left, and Adair County Deputy Sheriff Richard Redmon escort Jean Betts, Jefferson County driver trainer, out of the courtroom during a mock trial at the 2008 Kentucky Department of Education Pupil Transportation Conference this summer. McGlone and Betts portrayed the parents of a child who was hit by a car after getting off a public school bus. The event helped local district staff who work with pupil transportation learn more about the legal system and how public school transportation cases are conducted.

Kentucky teachers can help ACT prepare future tests

There are three ways Kentucky teachers, administrators and high school counselors can be more involved in the development of the ACT, which all Kentucky high school juniors are required to take as part of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System.

Educators can be involved in test-item writing and fairness consulting. They also can participate in a six-week Summer Visiting Teacher Program, which pays a stipend for working with ACT staff on programs connected to classroom instruction and assessment.

Test-item writing

Teachers at the elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels from throughout the nation write test items for ACT. Teachers can apply to become test-item writers. ACT then sends applicants a guide

for developing good test materials and asks for a work sample.

If an applicant's work sample is approved, ACT will offer a contract to develop test materials. Information about the process is on the ACT Web site.

Fairness consulting

Elementary-, secondary- and postsecondary-level educators also can work as content and fairness consultants for ACT. Consultants assist ACT staff in monitoring the content accuracy and fairness of all test materials.

Information about becoming a consultant for ACT can be found online. Educators who complete the fairness consultant questionnaire do not have to complete an item-writer questionnaire or content consultant questionnaire, as the same questionnaire serves all three

purposes. Educators who complete the questionnaire will be considered for both consultant and item-writer work.

Visiting Teacher Program

The ACT Visiting Teacher Program, held each summer, gives high school science, mathematics, social studies and language arts teachers an opportunity to review, evaluate and develop teacher resource materials and instructional support materials in those content areas for ACT's various testing programs.

During the six-week program (mid-June through July), teachers work with ACT staff and learn about educational measurement strategies they can put to use in their own classrooms. Visiting teachers also get hands-on experience in developing and reviewing content-specific multiple-choice and

constructed-response test items.

Visiting Teachers receive a stipend of \$5,500 and cost of round-trip transportation to ACT's national headquarters in Iowa City, Iowa. ACT also offers partially subsidized housing convenient to the work site.

More information and a downloadable application for the Visiting Teacher Program are online at <http://act.org/path/secondary/visit.html>. Deadline to apply to be a Visiting Teacher is usually at the end of December.

MORE INFO ...

<http://act.org/path/secondary> – Scroll to "Opportunities for Teachers" in the right-hand menu and click on links.

mitchelc@act.org or visitingteachers@act.org.

Conservation writing and art contests 'going green'

The annual Jim Claypool Conservation writing and art contests, sponsored by the Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts and Kentucky Farm Bureau, are "going green" for 2008. The topic for this year's contests is "Working Trees: Kentucky's Renewable Future."

To save paper – and the trees used to make it – the student tabloid, teachers' guide, entry forms, and principal and district report forms will be available only online.

The writing contest is open to students in grades 6-12. The art contest is for students in grades 1-5. Prizes are awarded to state and regional winners.

MORE INFO ...

www.conservation.ky.gov
www.kyfb.com

Low-cost professional development garners high results

By Robert Osborne
Pike County Schools

Teachers in the four Reading First schools in the Pike County school system are seeing great improvement in reading skills among their students. However, Superintendent Roger Wagner wanted students in ALL elementary schools across our district to have the same opportunities for improving their reading skills.

He gave the charge of making this improvement to the district's Title I Department. As Title I coordinator, I, along with Judy Dotson, who serves as the district's Reading First coach, quickly decided to form a reading task force to guide the work. The task force included individuals who know the most about reading: elementary teachers, principals, Reading First school coaches and district instructional supervisors.

It became quite obvious from the start that we had assembled a group of dedicated individuals. The group decided that all elementary schools within the district would implement Reading First strategies in primary classes as well as grades 4 and 5.

"Pike County schools had written its Reading First grant application with this very goal in mind," said Dotson.

Establishing the goal was one issue. How to achieve the superintendent's directive was another. The task force soon realized the scope of providing extensive professional development in reading to the K-5 staff of 11 elementary schools in a geographically huge district.

We knew we couldn't remove teachers from daily classroom instruction for professional development. There were funding issues for substitute teachers, and the number of substitutes needed was prohibitive.

We were limited by funding for trainers and presenters. We were not sure where we could host such a great number of participants. Finally, we needed to create follow-up for monitoring purposes. In short, it was a great challenge for the task force.

Roundtable discussions proved the value of this team, as the members found solutions to each obstacle and formulated a solid plan. Careful analysis of the most recent reading-assessment data led us to select six schools to participate in the first-year program.

We negated the need for substitute teachers by planning a reading workshop on one of our scheduled, districtwide professional development days. Mullins Elementary hosted the workshop because of its central location in our geographically large district.

The final two pieces of the puzzle – and perhaps the most important – punctuated the



Photo by Robert Osborne, Pike County School System

Teachers from Dorton Elementary (Pike County), Sandy Kelly, 5th-grade social studies teacher, left, and primary teachers, Debra Penley and Melissa Mullins, select materials for a hands-on activity during a breakout session at last spring's reading workshop for teachers in the district. Teachers from six elementary schools participated in the workshop to learn how to implement Reading First strategies in their schools.

plan. We couldn't afford to bring in the same outside trainers our Reading First schools have been exposed to over the past few years. Even if we had the money, we were sure we could not secure their services on such quick notice.

So, who would be the best trainers? The answer: those educators who have been implementing the Reading First strategies all along – the teachers and school coaches in our four Reading First schools.

In addition, teachers from Southside Elementary agreed to present. Although Southside is not a Reading First school, the staff has been implementing the same strategies with great success. This gave credence to the idea that a school does not have to be a Reading First school to demonstrate reading success.

Finally, professional development without follow-up has little chance of being effective. Again, task force members met the challenge using a two-tier approach to follow-up:

- The first tier trained principals in monitoring techniques so they can visit classrooms regularly to monitor teaching and learning.
- The second tier trained district instructional supervisors, who will regularly monitor classrooms, only on a different day than the principals.

The principal of a school and the instructional supervisor will then compare their respective monitoring sheets and address areas of need for each classroom.

Even the greatest plans do not always achieve anticipated success. However, this plan worked and worked well.

Approximately 88 teachers participated in the daylong reading workshop where they were exposed to those same reading strategies that are achieving phenomenal results in our four Reading First schools.

Based upon session evaluations, this was a great day for educators in our district. Phelps Elementary special-needs teacher Karen Bilter described the day as "one of the best days I have spent in education during my career."

Since the workshop, teachers who were session presenters have received numerous e-mails from participants requesting information about materials, center rotations and general questions about implementing the strategies they learned.

Principals from the participating schools have since attended a workshop to learn how to monitor classroom instruction using a tool developed and used by Reading First principals. In addition, principals at our Reading First schools attended this workshop to share their experiences and extend an offer

of assistance.

I have been involved in a great deal of initiatives in this district. However, I rate this as one of the most successful. I saw excitement in the faces of our teachers, and to hear our teachers are communicating from school to school is a plus.

The reading task force's plans include extending this type of professional development to the other five elementary schools within the district this school year. Because of tight professional development funds, we may be using online courses, proctoring and other low-cost activities for training.

"The success of the reading task force professional development workshop has brought about an excitement in our district for teaching reading. This is definitely something that we will work to sustain," said Dotson, the district's Reading First coach.

As a final note, the reading task force and its professional development workshop are serving as successful models for professional development in Pike County. The district's Head Start staff and summer program staff for grades K-5 were trained in Reading First strategies. We built the curriculum, instruction and professional development for a two-week elementary summer literacy program around Reading First strategies.

District leaders also decided to implement a math task force to focus on improving mathematics achievement for our primary students. The reading task force and its professional development workshop will serve as the model for this newest initiative.

Robert Osborne is the federal programs coordinator for Pike County school system and served on the reading task force. He can be contacted at (606) 433-9217, robert.osborne@pike.kyschools.us.

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500 Mero St.

Frankfort, KY 40601

New technology at KSD pays off for staff, students

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

When Sandra Frank gets hungry, she can place a quick order for pizza over the telephone before returning to her studies.

As he plans for the future, Isaias Salomon can call a college and inquire about on-campus housing or a science course he's interested in taking.

Frank and Salomon are just two of many students at Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) who are benefitting from new technology at the Danville school.

Before the 2007-08 school year ended, 39 videophones were installed on campus. The technology is reinventing the way students, teachers and administrators communicate with each other and people off campus.

"So much more is now possible for us," said Clyde Mohan, who is deaf and a 32-year veteran teacher at KSD. "These phones are something we've needed for a long time, and it's going to create changes all around in what the students and teachers are capable of doing."

The videophones are Sorenson VP-200 models. Sorenson Communications is a video-relay company that provides video-interpreting services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The technology also allows students to communicate through a relay interpreter with people who can hear but do not use sign language.

Both ends of the videophones are adaptive for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. People can use the videophones if both can sign or if one needs the services of an interpreter.

The videophones, which KSD obtained with funding from the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Education Network (KEN) project, greatly speed up communication for both students and staff, according to KSD technology director Deby Trueblood.

"Before the KEN project, KSD did not have enough bandwidth to utilize this technology," Trueblood

said. "This is an important step for KSD."

Prior to the videophones, KSD used TTYs, telephone typewriters, throughout the campus. These typewriter-looking devices attach to telephones. TTYs display one line of what a person is typing to the person at the other end of the phone.

"Each person must wait his or her turn to type back and forth," Trueblood said of the TTYs. "It is cumbersome and not user-friendly. It does not permit emotion nor does it permit persons who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate freely in their first language, American Sign Language."

With the videophones, people who are deaf or hard of hearing have two options. They can communicate directly with someone who signs as they view each other on the video monitor. Those who don't use sign language can use a video interpreter.

"If I want to order a pizza, it is so easy now," Frank, a KSD senior, said. She said ordering a pizza is as easy as sitting in front of the videophone, dialing the restaurant's number and hitting the interpreter button. The interpreter appears on the monitor and dials the pizza place. Frank signs her order to the interpreter, who gives her order to the person on the phone at the pizza place. "It takes five minutes instead of 20," she said.

There is a videophone in every dorm and classroom. Having the videophones in the classroom helps learning, according to Mohan, the KSD instructor.

"Students can call us during the evening and talk about lessons or ask questions if they are working on homework," he said. "If students get sick, they can leave the classroom and go to the office or infirmary while the teacher calls the office directly, thus saving time for teaching. Before, a teacher would often walk them to the office. There are unlimited options, and it's really a great way to improve language and signing skills in general for deaf children and hearing staff.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) senior Sandra Frank talks to Clyde Mohan, a teacher for 32 years at the school, using American Sign Language. They are demonstrating how easy it is for students at KSD to use the school's new videophones to reach their teachers outside the classroom with questions about assignments.

"You don't realize it, but more language learning is taking place through increased communication that videophones allow," he added. "Developing language skills for students who are deaf and hard of hearing needs to be ongoing, creating higher levels of thinking across the board."

Frank said the videophones have helped students ease the process of research. In May, a classmate called a defense attorney to ask questions students had about that day's lesson.

"The lawyer didn't have to take the time to come here for us to visually ask him questions (with the help of an interpreter), and we didn't have to wait that long for him to come. It happened in minutes," she said.

Salomon, who is a junior at KSD, couldn't communicate with his parents using the TTY. They speak Spanish, and there are very few TTY-relay interpreters who speak Spanish.

"I can now communicate easier with my parents," Salomon said. "They speak Spanish. I just simply ask for an ASL (American Sign Language) Spanish interpreter and that's it."

Salomon says the videophone gives him the chance to speak in his language of choice and allows him to hone his proficiency in that language. "I prefer signing. It's my language," he said. "I can have a one-on-one conversation, and I can react."

"It helps me with my language skills, my sign-language skills," Salomon added. "There are different ways to sign, and I pick up new things all the time with the videophone. I can help others, too."

Salomon says the videophones come in handy as he prepares for the future, too. He often calls Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., to inquire about courses he might be interested in taking. Gallaudet is a leading liberal arts school for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

While the videophones have been of great use to KSD, the school will have the added bonus of using videoconferencing equipment this year.

"The focus of our videoconferencing equipment will be to increase English vocabulary and ASL vocabulary simultaneously as well as to increase students' knowledge of the world through first-

hand personal experiences," said Trueblood, the school's technology director.

"The videoconferencing equipment is intended to be instructional in nature and is meant to serve the needs of whole classrooms or whole schools at a time," she added. "It can also do multi-point, meaning by scheduling a 'conference' you can have multiple schools join in a meeting at one time and take turns talking, but all schools would be viewed on the screen simultaneously. For example, we can bring a professor onto the screen from Gallaudet, a classroom from Florida School for the Deaf and an author from New York City all while sitting in our classroom in Danville."

Mohan, who serves as KSD's technology integration specialist, is excited to see the impact the added technology will have on his students. "This technology has opened up a world of opportunities for students," he said.

MORE INFO...

Deby Trueblood, deby.trueblood@ksd.kyschools.us

Clyde Mohan, clyde.mohan@ksd.kyschools.us

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

New evaluation tool for superintendents

Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA), in collaboration with the Oregon School Boards Association, is completing work on a new evaluation tool for local boards of education to consider for conducting annual evaluations of superintendents. The KSBA Board of Directors endorsed the two-part process in June.

Final work on the project will be completed after review and input from staff of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) and the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA).

The first phase of the evaluation tool centers on eight performance standards adopted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). These indicators are designed both to gauge the management and personal styles of the superintendent and to enable board members to discern whether each standard has been achieved. All standards are related to fundamental job requirements of superintendents.

The second phase focuses on the annual goals developed for the superintendent, including the board's role in setting and clarifying these goals. The superintendent then prepares an action plan for each goal. A comparison of both elements forms the basis for this segment of the evaluation.

When the final evaluation process is finished, an optional superintendent self-assessment document will be available.

Mike Oder, who manages KSBA's superintendent search service, plans to present the new assessment process at the KSBA and KASS winter conferences in December.

Kentucky makes progress on SREB's education goals

Kentucky is among the nation's leaders in raising students' reading achievement in the early grades, but it needs to work harder to raise college graduation rates and other measures of education progress, according to a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) report released this summer.

The report outlines Kentucky's progress on the SREB "Challenge to Lead" Goals for Education. A commission of the region's leaders approved the goals in 2002. The goals call for major improvements in K-12 student performance, college readiness and other key areas of education in Kentucky and the 15 other SREB member states.

"Kentucky is making solid progress in education, but just as in every state, much work remains to be done," said SREB President Dave Spence. Among the findings of the report:

- Although Kentucky's high school graduates enroll in college at a higher rate than other U.S. graduates, only 47 percent of students entering the state's four-year public colleges and universities graduate within six years. The national average is 55 percent.
- The proportion of children from low-income households is increasing in Kentucky, and their academic achievement also is increasing in some subjects. In Kentucky, 57 percent of 4th-graders from low-income families scored at or above the basic level in reading, up since 2003 and above the national percentage.
- Most SREB states are requiring more high school students to take higher-level courses to better prepare them for college, career training and the job market. Beginning with the Class of 2012, Kentucky will require geometry and Algebra II for all students seeking a standard diploma.

The full report, available online, provides details about Kentucky's performance on each of the 16 education goals.

www.sreb.org/Goals/State_Goals_Report_2008.asp

New tool to measure school quality from NSBA

The National School Boards Association's (NSBA) Center for Public Education has created a new tool and posted it on its Web site to aid board members and others in measuring school progress and quality.

"Good measures for good schools" is a guide to key measures of school quality that will help evaluate schools. In all, 28 measures are identified in seven categories that combine to form a full picture of school quality:

- student achievement
- student graduation and beyond
- staffing
- funding
- programs and facilities
- district and school climate
- school demographics

"Good measures for good schools" provides the national average performance for each measure. There are links to comparable state data to see how individual states perform.

www.centerforpubliceducation.org – Click on the "Research and Practice" pull-down menu near the top of the page, and select "Good measures for good schools."

Eleven Kentucky schools tops in 'Newsweek' report

Eleven Kentucky public schools recently were listed among "Newsweek's Best American High Schools." DuPont Manual High School (Jefferson County) is ranked No. 116, the highest spot earned by a Kentucky school. Ballard High School (Jefferson County) is at No. 524, followed by Henry Clay (Fayette County) at No. 685, Highlands (Fort Thomas Independent), ranked No. 715, and Paul Laurence Dunbar (Fayette County), ranked No. 737.

The No. 765 ranking belongs to Eastern High School (Jefferson County), No. 772 – Holmes (Covington Independent), No. 866 – Bowling Green (Independent), No. 871 – Woodford County, No. 1,278 – Ryle High School (Boone County) and No. 1,311 – Oldham County High School.

Public schools were ranked according to a challenge index ratio, which is calculated by taking the total number of Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) tests taken by all students at a school in 2006 and dividing that number by the number of graduating seniors. Schools ranked by "Newsweek" have the nation's strongest AP or IB programs.

www.newsweek.com/id/137547

Kentucky among leaders of quality pre-K programs

The 16 member states of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) continue to lead the nation in the overall quality of publicly funded prekindergarten for 4-year-olds.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) released "The State of Pre-school 2007," which shows that most of the nation's 4-year-olds still do not have access to state-funded prekindergarten.

Alabama and North Carolina shared the top ranking for overall quality of their pre-K programs, meeting all 10 of NIEER's standards. Arkansas and Oklahoma met nine of the 10 quality standards. Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky and South Carolina met at least eight of the standards.

The quality standards include a comprehensive curriculum, class size and staff-to-student-ratio requirements, mandatory teacher and staff credentials, and health and nutrition services.

Oklahoma ranked first for providing access to state-funded pre-K classes, serving 68 percent of the state's 4-year-olds. Seven of the top 10 states in this category are SREB states.

Kentucky ranked fifth nationally for access to prekindergarten for 3-year-olds.

<http://nieer.org/yearbook>



Photo by Amy Wallot

Waiting for her cue

Morganfield Elementary (Union County) Principal Heady Larson, left, waits for her cue to read the role of Cowboy 1 in a readers' theater with Bridget Mountjoy, Junction City Elementary (Boyle County) special education reading teacher, and Marsha Benton, Fayette County Reading First coach. The educators were participating in an activity during a session on "A Comprehensive Literacy Classroom" at the statewide Reading First Showcase on Sustainability this summer in Louisville.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences

Middle School Association

The Kentucky Middle School Association (KMSA) annual conference will be held Sept. 21-23 in Louisville. Keynote speaker will be Sharon Faber. There also will be sessions by the 2008 Schools to Watch, content area strands and more than 30 exhibitors.

www.kmsaonline.com

Social studies

The Kentucky Council for the Social Studies (KCSS) will hold its annual conference Sept. 23-24 in Louisville. The theme is "Leadership and Advocacy for Social Studies Education."

Contact: Mark Kopp (502) 564-9848, mark.kopp@education.ky.gov

www.kcss.org

School councils

The Kentucky Association of School Councils (KASC) will host its annual conference Sept. 29-30 in Louisville. Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud will deliver the keynote speech, and Kentucky Department of Education Associate Commissioner Ken Draut will offer assessment updates on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Contact: KASC, (859) 238-2188

www.kasc.net

KAPS 'RESPOND'

The annual Conference of the Kentucky Association for Psychology in the Schools (KAPS) will be Oct. 1-3 in Lexington. The theme for this year's conference is "RESPOND." A variety of state and national speakers will address topics such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Special Learning Disabilities (SLD), grant writing, school safety, Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS), dyslexia, screenings for behavior disorders and more.

Contact: Kristen Kyriacou, (502) 485-6094, kristen.kyriacou@jefferson.kyschools.us

Teachers of mathematics

Kentucky Council of Teachers of Mathematics (KCTM) annual conference is set for Oct. 11 in Louisville. Early registration deadline is Sept. 12.

Contact: Bethany Noblitt, (859) 572-5778, noblittb@nku.edu

www.kctm.org/Default.aspx?pageId=143039

KAHPERD

The fall convention of the Kentucky Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (KAHPERD) will be Oct. 15-17 in Louisville.

www.kahpemd.com/07/index.asp?pageID=1&pageDetails=23

Title I conference

The 30th annual Title I Regional Conference for Kentucky teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals will be Nov. 9-11 in Owensboro. Featured speakers include author and writing consultant Melissa Forney and Salome Thomas-El, author of the best-selling book "I Choose to Stay" and principal at the Russell Byers Public Charter School in Philadelphia.

www.grrec.ky.gov

KYSPRA

The annual Kentucky School Public Relations Association (KYSPRA) fall conference is set for Nov. 20-21 in Lexington. Among the working sessions for the conference will be: public relations tips from the pros, to what degree is your PR a success and how to deal with difficult people.

www.kyspra.org

Grant opportunity at the KASC conference

Three DREAM grants will be awarded to educators who can take something from the 2008 Kentucky Association of School Councils (KASC) Conference, develop it for classroom implementation and then share their project at the 2009 KASC conference.

Contact: Lisa Stone, (859) 238-2188, lisa@kasc.net

www.kasc.net

Events

Education outreach performances

The Kentucky Repertory Theatre's Education Outreach Performances for the fall will feature the following productions in Horse Cave:

"Abraham Lincoln," Aug. 22-Nov. 1

"To Kill a Mockingbird," Oct. 3-Nov. 15

"Amadeus," Oct. 24-Nov. 15

"King Lear," Nov. 21-Dec. 4

Contact: Kentucky Repertory Theatre, toll free (800) 342-2177

Future City competition

Middle school students can compete in the Kentucky Future City '09 competition, sponsored by the National Engineers Week Future

City Competition. Future City encourages interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through hands-on applications. Registration deadline is Oct. 15.

Contact: Diana Anderson, (606) 337-4386, danderson@pineville.kyschools.us

www.futurecity.org

Photo contest for students

Technology & Learning invites K-12 students to participate in the seventh annual digital photography contest. The competition challenges students to capture and share unique visions of the world. Students also have the option to digitally enhance photos with imaging software. The deadline to enter is Oct. 1.

www.techlearning.com/portraits

2009 teachers academy

The Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy will be held in July 2009. Teachers will spend five days at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, N.J., deepening their understanding of mathematics and science content, building expertise in facilitating student learning through problem solving and inquiry, and using links between mathematics and science that support student learning and understanding in the classroom. Applications are due by Oct. 31.

www.sendmyteacher.com/teachers_and_grown_ups.htm

Rain gardens

The Bluegrass Rain Garden Alliance offers a \$500 grant to help a central Kentucky school build a demonstration rain garden. Rain gardens are designed to capture rainwater from downspouts or parking lots to allow it time to soak into the ground instead of going into the storm water system and directly into nearby creeks. Grant applications are due by Aug. 29.

Contact: Brittany Zwicker, toll free (866) 222-1658, Brittany@kentuckyPRIDE.com

www.bluegrassraingardenalliance.org/?q=node/22

Resources

Maps-to-Teachers service

The Kentucky Geological Survey (KGS) at the University of Kentucky is providing a free, laminated county geology map for classrooms and libraries in Kentucky as part of its Maps-to-Teachers service. Teachers also can download maps from the KGS Web site. The map series, Generalize Geologic Maps for Land-Use Planning, helps students better understand the geology of the place where

(Continued on page 15)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Olmstead Middle School (Logan County)

BULLETIN BOARD (Continued)

they live, work and play.

Contact: Dan Carey, Kentucky Geological Survey, carey@uky.edu

www.uky.edu/KGS/announce/landuse_teacher.htm

Teacher as Leader endorsement

The Kentucky Leadership Academy (KLA) professional development program is offering a new program initiative for Kentucky teachers who would like to acquire a master's degree and Teacher as Leader endorsement.

Nonacademic measures show student progress

Data from the 2006-07 school year show that Kentucky's public school students had higher graduation rates than in the 2005-06 school year. Dropout rates decreased slightly during the same time period.

Kentucky's graduation rate increased from 83.26 percent in 2006 to 83.72 percent in 2007. Kentucky began reporting graduation-rate data with the 2000-01 school year to comply with requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Because NCLB requires that graduation rates not include students who received certificates of completion and those who took longer than four years to graduate, the Kentucky Board of Education in 2002 adopted a more rigid formula to determine the rates.

Rates collected after 2002 include only those students who finished high school within four years and those students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) that allow more than four years to graduate.

The overall high school dropout rate decreased slightly, from 3.34 percent in 2006 to 3.17 percent in 2007.

The initiative provides course credit and includes opportunities to attend KLA national and international events. Asbury College is partnering with KLA to deliver a Master of Arts in Education with a Teacher as Leader endorsement (pending approval by the Education Professional Standards Board).

Contact: Bonnie Banker, director of Graduate Education at Asbury, (859) 858-3511, ext. 2221; bonnie.banker@asbury.edu or Shirley Lafavers, director of the Kentucky Leadership Academy, shirley@kasa.org

www.asbury.edu

The school retention rate – the percentage of students held back a grade – increased slightly, from 2.92 percent to 3 percent. School attendance rates decreased from 94.60 percent to 94.18 percent during the time period.

The rate of successful transition to adult life decreased slightly from 2006 to 2007. The percentage of public high school graduates who went on to college decreased from 54.9 percent in 2006 to 54.3 percent in 2007.

Nonacademic data (dropout, graduation, retention, attendance and successful transition to adult life rates) are one component of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). The nonacademic results are posted on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site.

Results of the other component – the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) – will be released this fall. Each rate contributes a specific percentage to a school's overall accountability index.

www.education.ky.gov – Click on the "Testing and Reporting" link in the left-hand menu



Photo by Amy Wallot

The HistoryMobile's exhibit, "Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln," explores the 16th president's life in Kentucky. Students at last spring's Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) conference got the opportunity to preview the new exhibit that will be featured at the Kentucky State Fair Aug. 14-24.

Experience Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln at the 2008 Kentucky State Fair

Students attending the 2008 Kentucky State Fair with their families or on school trips will have an opportunity to explore the many facets of Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln, an experience provided by the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS). Teacher educational materials are available online in advance of school visits to the Kentucky State Fair, Aug. 14-24.

"We want this to be an educational experience," said Kent Whitworth, executive director of KHS. "We want both students and adults to leave this area with a better understanding of Kentucky's many connections to Lincoln throughout his life. There's no better time to learn his legacy than during the bicentennial commemoration of his birth."

The national commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth began this year on Feb. 12. Events are being held throughout the commonwealth to commemorate the Lincoln legacy in Kentucky. His 200th birthday is Feb. 12, 2009.

The 8,000-square-foot Lincoln experience will be housed in South Wing B of the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville. Lincoln interpreters, rail-splitters, museum theater and the KHS HistoryMobile will be part of the experience in this area.

The HistoryMobile is a tractor-trailer that now houses an exhibit on "Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln." The exhibit explores Lincoln's frontier childhood, his career from a log house to the White House, and his struggles to end slavery and lead the nation through the Civil War. In addition, a new portable

museum exhibit on Lincoln will debut at the state fair.

Students and adults who visit the fair exhibit will be introduced to Kentucky's many Lincoln-related sites through the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail. They can pick up a trail passport to begin collecting stamps at each of the Lincoln sites throughout the state. After collecting 10 or more stamps, visitors are entered to win monthly prize drawings.

Educational games and a narrative stage will help bring Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln to life for visitors. There also will be an opportunity for visitors to have their picture taken with both Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln.

"We're so excited about the opportunity to introduce Lincoln to both children and adults at the 2008 Kentucky State Fair," said Whitworth, executive director of KHS. "We're going to give them an opportunity to learn about Lincoln's many Kentucky connections and to have a lot of fun in the process."

Lincoln merchandise will be available in the mobile 1792 Store in this area. Students also can get a temporary Lincoln bicentennial tattoo or pick up a free Lincoln bumper sticker or a Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission window cling.

MORE INFO ...

www.kystatefair.org/special_exhibits/educational_exhibit/teachers_students/educational_exhibit2.html
www.history.ky.gov

Changed your address? Let us know

If you don't want to miss an issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, please take a few moments to learn how to let us know when your address changes.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are a certified employee of a Kentucky public school, you can change your mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at http://ktrs.ky.gov/01_active_members/B_change_name.htm.
- Submit a written request that includes your name, old address, new address, Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to:

Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
 ATTN: Tammy Brown
 479 Versailles Rd.
 Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or by mail to:

Kentucky Teacher
 612 Capital Plaza Tower
 500 Mero St.
 Frankfort, KY 40601

Teachers of the year find right notes for learning

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Penny Akers, music teacher at Abraham Lincoln Elementary (LaRue County), said she became frustrated with the flute and quit band in the 7th grade. But her mother and music teacher had a discussion in front of her about the importance music might play in her life that helped change her mind.

She agreed to resume band and flute lessons if her mother would help her. The same afternoon her mother began playing piano from a hymnal but wouldn't let Akers look at the music – she wanted her daughter to figure out the melody by ear.

"So I learned to play flute through my mother making me learn to play by ear," she said. "I think she knew I had that tendency, and she just knew how I would best learn."

Figuring out how students best learn helped earn Kentucky Music Educators Association's Music Teacher of the Year awards for Akers, Jeanie Orr of Bowling Green (Independent) Junior High School and Brian Froedge of North Hardin High School (Hardin County).

Akers, who was named Elementary Music Teacher of the Year, knew she wanted to teach as early as 2nd grade. "I remember thinking, 'How would I teach this better? How would I make my room more interesting?'" she said. "I think I was preparing myself to be a teacher, and I think I'm a better teacher because of what we as teachers didn't know in the '60s and the '70s."

As a junior in high school, there weren't a lot of professional options for young women who enjoyed music, Akers said. She enjoyed working with children through her church, and her parents were both teachers, so she went into education.

"I didn't learn the way teachers were teaching at the time. I didn't do well just listening and spilling back information," she said. "I knew I had to be a tactile learner. I knew I had to have hands on. I knew I had to see the big picture, and then I needed the big picture to be broken down into parts. My music teacher did that naturally."

Froedge and Orr, on the other



Brian Froedge, High School Music Teacher of the Year, conducts the wind symphony class at North Hardin High School (Hardin County).

hand, got later starts with music and their future profession. Froedge, the High School Music Teacher of the Year, said he took some music lessons before high school, "but I didn't stay with it."

He joined the middle school band as a 7th-grader. "I don't know that I was that serious about it in middle school," Froedge said.

He went to Transylvania University as an English and chemistry double major. But working at a band camp after his freshman year in college changed his future.

"I just enjoyed that experience so much I just kept thinking all week, 'I'm getting paid to do this,'" Froedge said.

Orr, the Middle School Music Teacher of the Year, began taking piano lessons when she was 9. "I always knew I wanted to teach, but the piano was my first love," she said.

She taught private piano and voice lessons and provided accompaniment for church choirs and community music functions. She began her public school teaching career as an elementary music teacher 16 years after graduating from college.

She started as an itinerant music teacher at three elementary schools, and she produced musicals at each. The Bowling Green district supports musical productions, and she directs the music at



Jeanie Orr, Middle School Music Teacher of the Year, stands behind the piano as she directs choir class at Bowling Green (Independent) Junior High School.

her middle school's annual spring theater production.

"I don't think any of us teach children just the subject matter we are licensed or certified to teach. We teach them about everyday life. We teach them about the sacrifices they're going to have to make, and we teach them about the challenges they're going to encounter. Further, we encourage personal empowerment for a life where some experiences will be wonderful while others adverse. Each of us uses our own particular genre to do that," Orr said. "I'm not just teaching music, I'm teaching children. Music is just the subject matter I use to accomplish the task."

Akers, the elementary teacher, said teachers should learn from each other as well. Construction finished late on the new Abraham Lincoln Elementary building last fall. Rather than worry about not having an attractive bulletin board and posters on the walls, she borrowed an idea from last year's Elementary Teacher of the Year, Lisa Hussung, who writes music terminology and definitions on a lab coat she wears at school.

Instead of putting all the core content on the coat at one time, Akers decided to add words gradually. That way students she has



Alyssa Betz, left, watches as Penny Akers, Elementary Music Teacher of the Year, dances with primary student Andrew Pruitt to help students prepare for a program on folk music at Abraham Lincoln Elementary (LaRue County).

in class one week each month get excited about watching her lab coat "bulletin board" for new postings and anticipating upcoming units of study during the other three weeks, Akers said.

"That bulletin board goes with me as a learning tool throughout the building throughout the course of the month," she said.

Froedge, the high school teacher, said he learned a lot about life being in a school band, such as a strong work ethic, leadership and respect for peers and teachers. "I think all those things were heavily reinforced when I was in high school," he said. "I'm trying to instill a lot of

those values to my students."

Froedge said his school has a lot of economically disadvantaged students who have a lot of challenges in their lives. "When they come to our program, I think we really try to take care of our kids in a lot of different ways other than just teaching them to be great musicians," he said.

MORE INFO...

Penny Akers, (270) 358-4112, penny.akers@larue.kyschools.us

Brian Froedge, (270) 351-3167, brian.froedge@hardin.kyschools.us

Jeanie Orr, (270) 746-2290, jeanie.orr@bgreen.kyschools.us

Photos by Amy Wallot